

# Cattle Raising in the Americas



WHEN the United States ceases to be an exporter of beef and pork from whence will Europe get its meat?

Will the United States, with its large ratio of increase in population, with which the meat production by no means keeps pace, be able in the future to feed itself?

Must Europe and the United States curtail their meat consumption?

There is no need to take a pessimist's view in answering any of these questions. The meat proposition is already serious, it is true, but this is because we are at the turning of the ways and not because the immediate future, or even the future for some hundreds of years at least, presents any real difficulty to the solution of this proposition.

Leaving out of consideration all questions involving the so-called meat trust, the tariff, etc., and looking at the matter simply as a question of economy in meat production, there is no need to fear a famine, nor ought there to be any fear of high prices to limit the consumption.

A number of factors enter into the world's present meat problem, one of the most important of which is the change in conditions under which meat has been produced in the United States. The change from range to farm production of beef cattle and the improved shipping facilities for corn, which latter has revolutionized the hog industry, have together upset the balance in the meat market. Unlimited free range on government lands made cheap meat, but the taking up of those lands by settlers, and particularly the taking up of land around water sites has changed the whole situation. The extension of railways and an improved service has given the western farmer a choice, either to sell his corn or to feed for meat, where formerly he had no choice. It was either hog or cattle raising. He raised hogs because he was forced to it, and he bought range beef cattle to put them in condition for the market by feeding for a few months with a part of his surplus grain.

The raising of cattle on the free ranges of the west was the cheapest method of meat production at the time practiced in the United States, but it is a question whether beef may not now be produced, and is not now produced by a few farmers, even cheaper than on the western ranges in the past.

The poor quality of range meat, which necessitated several months of farm feeding and care in order to be gotten in condition for the market, the great losses in the herds due to insufficient food and water, and the lack of winter shelter made the business of cattle raising on the western plains a more or less uncertain and precarious industry. It was an exotic, and as such it will die with changing conditions.

The future of meat production in the United States is a farming proposition, and like all other questions connected with the national agriculture depends for its satisfactory solution upon the improvement of farm methods. To remain a meat-exporting country, lands must be brought up to the European standard of production. At that standard, or even considerably below, farming in the United States pays, and pays well, and in no way better than by turning grass and grain into meat. But until the United States adjusts itself to the changed conditions and can again enter the European market as a competitor with Argentina, Uruguay and Australia for the meat trade where will Europe, and even the United States, should it have a temporary need for meat, secure their supplies?

The answer to this question is not difficult. It is only surprising that it has not been more fully recognized.

The broad plains of Mexico and Central America, of Venezuela and Colombia, the Amazon region of Brazil, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador rival, if they do not exceed the famed pampas of Argentine and Uruguay as cheap meat-producing districts.

In the country of the Orinoco alone, Venezuela and eastern Colombia, there is an area of territory more than equal to France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark, or ten times the size of the state of New York, which has its superior as a cattle country in no part of the world, if indeed it has anywhere its equal.

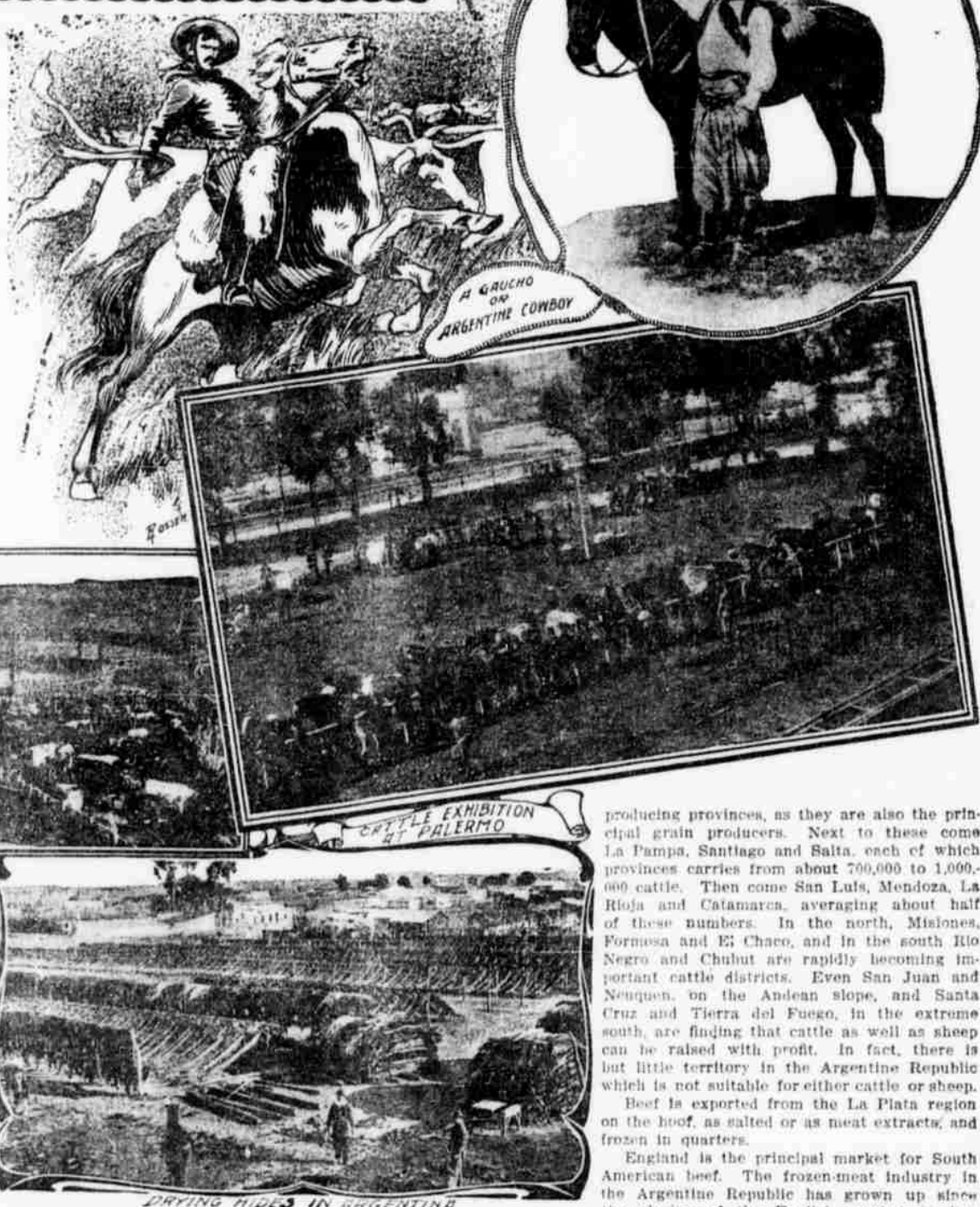
Mexico offers many advantages to the stock raiser. The conditions there are those with which stockmen from the United States are more or less familiar, which last fact, in part, accounts for the large investments of American capital made in this industry within the last few years in Mexico. Cattlemen own the land in large tracts of from 100,000 to 1,000,000 acres, acquired from the government by grant and at a very low figure. This prevents the shutting off from water, which has done so much to destroy the range industry in the United States. The winters are mild and there is no danger of loss from blizzards—in fact, the grazing is good all the year round.

The character of the ranges on the Pacific coast side in Jalisco, Michoacan, Guerrero, southern Oaxaca and Tepic are similar in character to the northern ranges but not so well watered, and the grass is scantier.

On the Gulf side there are entirely different conditions. On the slope of the eastern Cordilleras in the states of San Luis Potosi, Tamaulipas and northern Vera Cruz is the region known to the Huasteca Potosina, the country of the Tamest, Panuco, Temporal and Tamasopocho rivers. This is an almost ideal grass country. It is a succession of valleys separated by grass-covered terraces or hills increasing in height from the low plains near the coast to the borders of the central plateau 6,000 feet. This slope receives the moist breezes from the Gulf of Mexico in the form of rain during the summer months and dew in winter, and is always free from frost, drought and excessive heat. The natural pasturage of this country is as fine as any in the world, except on the Orinoco and in the upper Amazon country. Cattle in good condition can be sent to market at a cost of less than \$10 gold a head. On the northern and western ranges lean cattle cost to produce from \$2 to \$5 a head and can be fattened for market to cost in all about \$10 a head.

The latest Mexican statistics show about 5,250,000 head of cattle in the whole country, of an estimated value of about \$8 gold per head. Chihuahua and Vera Cruz lead with about 400,000 head for each state. As compared with Argentina with its 39,000,000 head of cattle it can be seen that Mexico is but at the beginning of the industry; in fact, as present the country produces but little meat above its own needs, yet it could, on natural pasture alone, carry twice the number of cattle now grazing in Argentina, and could easily supply to the European markets from its surplus an amount of meat twice what the United States has even been able to supply from its surplus.

South of Mexico in Central America and in parts of Mexico not above mentioned there is yet another cattle country, where the climate is more tropical. On the Pacific side the area suitable for cattle is limited. It is similar to the Pacific slope of Mexico, but the country is more thickly settled, a larger proportion of the land is devoted to agriculture,



DRYING HIDES IN ARGENTINA

It is only surprising

and consequently there is less room for beef cattle. The country offers fine opportunities for dairy stock and will undoubtedly develop along this line. In the highlands and on the Atlantic slope there are large areas of fine open country in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, where cattle can be produced as cheaply as anywhere in the world. It is a known fact that in Guatemala and Honduras four-year-old stock can be produced on the ranges to cost less than \$2 a head. The native stock needs improving. It is the same which was formerly known in the United States as the Texas long horn. When crossed by Shorthorn bulls the resulting progeny is a first-class beef animal. Hereford, Galloway and Aberdeen-Angus crosses also produce good results.

At present the industry is almost entirely local. Millions of acres of the finest pasturage in the world, where the native grasses stand from knee to shoulder high, are utilized. A title of the capital and enterprise which have produced such large results in Argentina and Uruguay would make Central America, although limited in area, an important factor in the world's meat market and would pay to the investors a handsome return on their investment.

In South America there are three great natural cattle regions which in area and adaptability for cattle production are unequalled in any other part of the world. The plains of the Orinoco, of the Amazon and of the Plata rivers are without doubt the best adapted for producing beef cattle cheaply and on a large scale of any other sections of either the old or the new world.

Behind the Venezuelan coast range of mountains lies the basin of the Orinoco. This river has nearly 500 tributaries and at its greatest length is 1,500 miles long and is navigable from the ocean for about 1,200 miles. For about half its length it flows north and then turns almost directly east and continues in this line to the Atlantic. Near the bend of the Orinoco it is joined by the Apure, one of its chief tributaries, which has come down from the eastern Cordilleras of Colombia through the heart of the region of the llanos or prairie lands. These lands continue on to the east to the vertex of the delta of the Orinoco. They comprise about 150,000 square miles in Venezuela and about 120,000 square miles in Colombia. It is the largest single compact area of high-class natural pasture in the world. In the luxuriance of its grasses it is as far ahead of the pampas lands of Argentina as are these ahead of the shortgrass lands of Kansas or Nebraska. It is one immense level prairie, thickly carpeted with para and guinea grass, growing twice as high as broom sedge on a neglected Virginia farm. It is crossed and interlaced by hundreds of rivers flowing into the Orinoco or into its larger tributaries, the Apure, the Arauca, the Meta, the Vichada and the Guaviare. From these rivers spread out smaller rivers, creeks and gullies joining one river to another so that the whole is one great water mesh. In some places for a hundred miles one must cross water every half mile or less. The creeks and gullies, when wide enough are navigable for launches and flatboats and offer the best and cheapest possible system of highways leading directly down to the Orinoco and the sea.

From the earliest days of the Spanish conquest this country has been famed as a cattle land. At the time of the war of independence, in 1812, it was estimated that there were

3,000,000 head of cattle in the country. The industry has never since been so flourishing. These natural cattle lands comprise about 17,000,000 acres and could easily carry 180,000,000 head of cattle and not be overstocked.

In the past the industry has been much hampered in both Colombia and Venezuela by government restrictions, monopolies and taxation, and the estimates as to the cost of cattle production in consequence vary much. Under the same favorable conditions as exist in Mexico, Argentina and Uruguay the llanos of Colombia and Venezuela can produce cattle ready for slaughter at a cost which ought not to exceed \$2 gold per head.

In the valley of the Amazon there are no such great prairie lands as exist on the Orinoco, yet on the whole there is as much or even more first-class cattle country, a considerable part of which is in easy deep-water connection with the world's markets.

The Amazon basin comprises one-eighth of the habitable earth and one-half of the most fertile portion thereof. In a territory so large as this it would be unreasonable not to expect to find many varieties of soil and soil cover, and such is the fact. Between the rivers tributary to the great river and back from the bottoms are here and there large tracts of open land similar to that found on the Gulf coast of Mexico, in the prairie lands of Louisiana and in Honduras and in Guatemala. This is all fine cattle country; there could be no better.

Near the headwaters of the great rivers that flow down to make the mighty Amazon, on the eastern slope of the Andes, are millions of acres of fine grass lands in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, as well as in Brazil, that are more immediately available for cattle raising than are the lands farther east in the great basin.

The third great river basin of South America is that of the Plata river, with which must be included the southern half of Argentina, whose rivers drain directly into the Atlantic. Any account of the cattle industry of Argentina must of necessity be less a story of what can be done than of what has been done. Included in the Plata basin in addition to Argentina are Uruguay, Paraguay and southern Brazil. The cattle conditions are similar over all this area.

Argentina ranks third in the world, as a cattle-producing country. Russia and the United States alone lead it; but Argentina has only about 6,000,000 inhabitants to feed, which accounts for the fact that it is the leading country in beef exports. Russia and the United States must consume most of what they raise; Argentina ships the greater proportion of what it raises, not only beef cattle, but horses, sheep, wool, corn, wheat and flaxseed.

At the last census, taken about two years ago, there were 29,115,620 cattle in Argentina and about 6,000,000 in Uruguay. This is nearly all grade stock of the best English blood—Shorthorn, Hereford and Aberdeen-Angus. Argentina and Uruguay cattle are reared under conditions somewhat peculiar to the locality. They are not range cattle nor yet exactly farm cattle, and but little or no grain is fed, yet the export steers of Buenos Aires or Montevideo are fully equal in size and will cut as much prime beef and as little waste as the best steers of Kansas, Pennsylvania or south-west Virginia.

In the central provinces of Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Santa Fe, Entre Rios and Corrientes the native grasses are better and more alfalfa is grown. These five are the principal cattle-

producing provinces, as they are also the principal grain producers. Next to these come La Pampa, Santiago and Salta, each of which provinces carries from about 700,000 to 1,000,000 cattle. Then come San Luis, Mendoza, La Rioja and Catamarca, averaging about half of these numbers. In the north, Misiones, Formosa and El Chaco, and in the south Rio Negro and Chubut are rapidly becoming important cattle districts. Even San Juan and Neuquen, on the Andean slope, and Santa Cruz and Tierra del Fuego, in the extreme south, are finding that cattle as well as sheep can be raised with profit. In fact, there is but little territory in the Argentine Republic which is not suitable for either cattle or sheep.

Beef is exported from the La Plata region on the hoof, as salted or as meat extracts, and frozen in quarters.

England is the principal market for South American beef. The frozen-meat industry in the Argentine Republic has grown up since the closing of the English market to live cattle.

In the year 1908 the Argentine Republic exported 60,916 head of live beef cattle, three-fourths of which went to Chile. It exported 2,295,784 quarters (573,940 whole beefs) of frozen beef, and from the salting works 155,400 beefs as salt beef, meat extract or jerked beef.

In this latter industry Uruguay in addition exported 754,200 and southern Brazil 425,000 head, respectively.

As a field for investment in the cattle industry the La Plata region offers the very best of chances. In fact, it is without a rival, and will remain such until a like enterprise and capital which has there produced such marvelous results shall seek a new opportunity on the Orinoco and in the upper Amazon country.

The field for cattle growing is large; there need be no scarcity though the United States should cease to export and become an importer of meat.

## No Corsets at West Point

Col. K. R. Collins, a retired army officer who was seen at the Raleigh, in discussing West Pointers said to a reporter of the Washington Herald: "I have often heard a question as to whether West Pointers wore corsets. It is absurd, in a way, because should any effeminate youngster resort to such a thing it would be an impossibility to keep the affair a secret, and, once known, his school life would become a burden to him on account of the endless amount of criticism he would receive from his fellows. He would be made the laughing stock of the school and would soon find himself the possessor of any number of effeminate nicknames that would grate upon his ears in any but a pleasant manner."

"It is true," continued the old soldier, "that many West Pointers acquire a figure the perfection of symmetry and a carriage the acme of manly grace, but these are due not to any ingenious appliance, but to the systematic drills and exercises that make every cadet, to a certain extent, an athlete. At the outset these young fellows are put through what are called the 'setting up' exercises, their object being to straighten the body and develop the chest. One might suppose that it would require a great amount of such exercise to make any marked showing, but three long hours of such exercise daily will soon produce beneficial results in the most stooped forms."

The cadet uniform is also a great help in this direction. The dress coat is tight, very tight. The shoulders are heavily padded in order to give them a square effect. The chest is made thick, so that there will be no danger of wrinkling. And in size, a new dress coat seems always to be designed for a boy several sizes smaller than the one who is to wear it. A new dress coat, in fact, is always a source of suffering to its owner. When he first puts it on, it buttons readily about the neck, but seems to lack about six inches at the waist. The owner may squirm and wriggle and attempt to reduce his waist to a minimum circumference, but his maiden efforts are never sufficient to button the new dress coat. Experience is a great teacher, though, and the young fellow laughingly requests one or two friends to lend their assistance, and with their combined tugging and squeezing he finally succeeds in buttoning the coat. All this for the sake of looks; comfort has no place in the makeup of a West Pointer; it is discipline and looks."

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## THE REASON.



Janitor—I know the water is turned off. I'm sorry, but it isn't my fault. Tenant—I know, and I guess that's why you're sorry.

## The Deacon's Parable.

A self-conscious and egotistical young clergyman was supplying the pulpit of a country church. After the service he asked one of the deacons, a grizzled, plain-spoken man, what he thought of his morning effort.

"Well," answered the old man, slowly, "I'll tell ye in a kind of parable. I remember Tunk Weatherbee's first deer hunt, when he was green. He followed the deer's tracks all right, but he followed 'em all day in the wrong direction."—Housekeeper.

## Comparing Notes.

Mrs. Newby—My little Robbie is remarkably strong; he is only four years old, but he can raise his high chair with one hand!

Mr. Spooler—Oh, that's nothing; in the apartment house where I try to do my sleeping there's a baby that's only four months old, and that child can raise the roof with no hand at all.

## Qualified.

"How does your new book go?" "Great! I am convinced that it is a classic."

"A classic? What convinces you of that?"

"Everybody has either seen it or heard of it, but nobody has read it."

## Plenty of Material.

"Son," said the press humorist, "you have inherited some of my humor." "Not enough to make a living with, dad."

"Never mind. I'm going to leave you all of my jokes."

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